

SWAFFHAM URBAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH FOR
THE YEAR ENDED 31st. DECEMBER,
1950.

STAFF.

Medical Officer of Health...C.W. Orr, L.R.C.P., L.R.C.S., (EDIN),
(from 1.1.50 to 24.9.50) L.R.F.P. & S., (GLAS), D.P.H.,

Medical Officer of Health...Robert N.C. McCurdy, M.B., ^{Ch.B.}CL.B., D.P.H.
(from 25.9.50 to 31.12.50)

Sanitary Inspector.....C. Frobisher, M.I. Mun.E., A.M.I.
Struct.E., F. Inst.H.E., C.R.S.I.

GENERAL STATISTICS

Area.....7592 acres.
Population (estimated by Registrar General at mid-
year).....3,048.
Number of Inhabited houses at 1.4.50.....1,062
Rateable Value at 1.4.50.....£12,602
Product of Penny Rate.....£49.4.8d.

Mr. Chairman, Ladies & Gentlemen,

I have the honour to present my first Annual Report on the sanitary circumstances, health and vital statistics of your District for the year 1950.

The health of the District has in most respects been good. The birth rate has risen to 13.1 per thousand of the population, although this is still well below the national rate of 15.8. The death rate has fallen to 11.15 which is just below the national rate of 11.6.

On the other hand, although the number of deaths of infants under 1 year of age fell to 2, this still gives an Infant Mortality Rate of 50, while the national rate has fallen to 29.8. Although it may be said that, in the circumstances in which they occur, many infant deaths are inevitable, it does not necessarily follow that these circumstances are inevitable.

The number of cases of infectious disease notified rose very considerably, but this was mostly due to the large epidemic of measles. There was one confirmed case of diphtheria notified, the first for some years.

The number of fresh cases of tuberculosis rose to 5. This gives a case rate of 1.64 per thousand of the population, while the County of Norfolk tuberculosis case rate was only 0.89. Of the factors which are to some extent under the control of the District Council, good housing is by far the most important in improving this situation. So long as there is so much overcrowding, and so many insanitary dwellings are still inhabited in the District, some responsibility must be accepted for it.

The Milk and Dairies Regulations, 1949, which had come into operation on the first day of October, 1949, were first brought to the attention of your District Council in 1950.

/Under Part VII of these regulations

100

0

Under Part VII of these regulations, the Medical Officer of Health of a district has authority to serve a notice insisting on the heat treatment of the milk at any registered premises within the district, if he is in possession of evidence which satisfies him that such milk is infected with disease communicable to man. By the end of 1950 one such notice had been served owing to infection of the milk with Brucella Abortus.

The enforcement of this provision may involve the local authority in considerable expense and this is objected to because the local authority cannot take any steps to limit the time during which it must be enforced by, for example, eliminating the infected animal(s) from a herd, nor can the local authority prevent the sale of infected animals.

From a public health point of view this provision must be regarded as a further step towards universal heat treatment (pasteurisation) of milk.

During 1950, 16 Council Houses were completed as against 20 in 1949. Two of these were two-bedroomed, and fourteen were three-bedroomed houses.

Although published in 1949, the Report of the Royal Commission on population, with its important recommendations on housing, has not received the attention it deserves.

Figures are given in this report to show that about 42 per cent of married couples have only one or no children, 47 per cent have two to four children, and 11 per cent have five or more.

It is clear therefore that the three-bedroomed house is just the right size for only about half the number of families, it is unnecessarily big for 42 per cent and too small for another 11 per cent. Furthermore, there are already about 10 per cent of the population aged 65 and over and in another 30 years this percentage will have risen to at least 16. Far more small houses will be wanted in the future by those whose children have left home. It is unfair that these elderly people, and those who do not get married, should be obliged to remain in the dilapidated old cottages because they cannot fully utilise a three-bedroomed house.

For this reason I am particularly pleased that so many small houses are to be erected in 1951.

It would be of great help if there were some clearly defined method of selecting tenants for Council Houses. This would help me to give you such information on the present housing conditions and other circumstances of applicants as would be most useful to you, and, more important still, it would help to prevent any possible suspicion of favouritism in selection.

No action was taken during the year under Section 47 of the National Assistance Act, 1948.

MEDICAL STATISTICS

<u>BIRTHS</u>			
<u>Live Births</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Legitimate	20	19	39
Illegitimate	1	-	1
	<u>21</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>40</u>

<u>Stillbirths</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
Legitimate	1	0	1
Illegitimate	0	0	0
	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>

Population at mid-year, births, birthrate, stillbirths, stillbirth rates during the past four years.

	1947	1948	1949	1950
Population	2,632	2,822	3,024	3,048
Births (total)	32	45	34	40
Birthrate, per 1,000 of population	12.1	15.9	11.3	13.1
Stillbirths	1	0	0	1
Stillbirth rate per 1,000 of population	0.38	0	0	0.33
Stillbirth rate per 1,000 total births	31.2	0	0	24.4

<u>Deaths</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>	<u>Total</u>
All Ages	19	15	34
Infants under 1 year	1	1	2

Causes of death of infants under one year

Cause	Male	Female	Total
Congenital debility	1	0	1
Haemolytic disease	0	1	1
Total	1	1	2

Neither of these deaths was of an illegitimate infant.

Population at mid-year, deaths, deathrate, infant deaths and Infant Mortality Rate during the past four years

	1947	1948	1949	1950
Population	2,632	2,822	3,024	3,048
Deaths	42	28	45	34
Deathrate per 1,000 of population	15.9	9.9	14.9	11.15
Infant Deaths	2	0	3	2
Infant Mortality Rate per 1,000 live births	62.5	0	88	50

Deaths from certain selected causes during the
past four years (figures as available)

Cause	1947	1948	1949	1950
Tuberculosis	0	1	1	0
Bronchitis and Pneumonia	— 0	1	5	1
Other notifiable infectious diseases	1	0	0	0
Motor vehicle and other accidents	— 0	1	0	2
Pregnancy, childbirth and abortion	0	0	0	0
Cancer	8	5	3	10

Deaths according to ages (compiled from returns submitted
by the District Registrar)

Age Group	Male	Female	Total
Under 1 year	1	1	2
1 and under 5	1	0	1
5 " " 10	0	0	0
10 " " 20	0	0	0
20 " " 30	0	0	0
30 " " 40	0	0	0
40 " " 50	1	1	2
50 " " 60	2	0	2
60 " " 70	3	5	8
70 " " 80	7	4	11
80 " " 90	3	4	7
90 and over	1	0	1
Total	19	15	34

Causes of deaths at ages above 1 year and below 50

Age Group	Sex	Cause
1 to 5	Male.	Mongolism
40 to 50	Male	Nephritis
	Female	Medullo Blastoma

In addition one male over 60 died following a motor vehicle accident and one male over 70 died as the result of an accidental fall.



Deaths from all causes (Registrar General's Short list)

List No	Cause	Male	Female	Total
10	Cancer, stomach	2	1	3
14	Cancer, other sites	2	5	7
17	Vascular lesions of nervous system	1	4	5
18	Coronary disease, angina	4	0	4
20	Other heart disease	1	3	4
21	Other circulatory disease	1	0	1
22	Influenza	1	0	1
24	Bronchitis	1	0	1
28	Nephritis and Nephrosis	1	1	2
32	Other diseases	3	1	4
33	Motor vehicle accidents	1	0	1
34	All other accidents	1	0	1
Total		19	15	34

The following table compares birth rates, death rates, etc. in this District with those of England and Wales and of the Administrative County of Norfolk in 1950

	England & Wales	Norfolk.	Swaffham U.D.
Birthrate	15.8	15.85	13.1
Stillbirth rate per 1,000 of population	0.37	0.33	0.33
Death Rate	11.6	11.46	11.15
Infant Mortality rate per 1,000 live births	29.8	25.7	50.0
Tuberculosis death rate per 1,000 of population	0.36	0.22	0.0
Tuberculosis case rate per 1,000 of population	~~0.0~~	0.89	1.64

Infectious Diseases notified during the past four years.

Disease	1947	1948	1949	1950
Tuberculosis, all sites	2	0	2	5
Scarlet Fever	1	6	2	4
Whooping Cough	12	28	2	1
Diphtheria	0	0	0	1
Erysipelas	0	0	1	0
Measles	0	10	2	131
Pneumonia	1	2	0	0
Infectious jaundice	0	0	4	2

No cases of food poisoning, puerperal pyrexia or poliomyelitis were notified in 1950.

Infectious Diseases notified in 1950 by ages

Disease	Under 1	1-5	5-10	10-15	15-25	25-45	45-65	Over 65	Total
Tuberculosis, all sites	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	0	5
Scarlet Fever	0	2	1	0	0	1	0	0	4
Whooping Cough	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Diphtheria	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Measles	3	39	77	10	1	1	0	0	131
Infectious jaundice	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2

The case of Diphtheria occurred in a child who had not been immunised.

Infectious Diseases notified in 1950 by month of notification

Disease	Jan	Feb	Mar	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Tuberculosis, all sites	0	0	0	2	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	0	5
Scarlet Fever	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	0	2	4
Whooping Cough	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Diphtheria	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Measles	9	84	10	1	0	1	1	3	2	0	0	20	131
Infectious Jaundice	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2

The following table shows the number of cases on the tuberculosis register at 31.12.50 compared with 31.12.49

	Respiratory			Non-Respiratory			Total
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total	
31.12.49	7	4	11	2	3	5	16
31.12.50	7	5	12	1	4	5	17

I should like to thank the Chairman and Members of the Council and my colleagues on the staff for their support and helpfulness during the year.

I should especially like to thank the Sanitary Inspector for giving me such a thorough and interesting introduction to the District.

I have the honour to be,

Your obedient Servant,

ROBERT N.C. McCURDY.

Medical Officer of Health.

SANITARY INSPECTOR'S REPORT FOR YEAR 1950

Mr. Chairman, Ladies & Gentlemen,

I herewith present my Annual Report in the usual form for your information and consideration:-

WATER SUPPLY

The Council have made progress in the matter of acquisition of the private Waterworks, but the date of taking over is dependent upon the Ministry approval. Considerable work lies ahead to bring the workup to a reasonable standard of maintenance.

BUILDING

During the year, the following houses were built and occupied:-

Council Houses.....	16
Private Houses.....	<u>2</u>
Total	18

The Council are constructing 10 Bungalows on the Spinners Lane site and anticipate approval for a further 10, early in 1951.

Under the Housing Act, 1949 (Part II) the Council are enabled to assist property owners to recondition their properties and grants are available for such purpose.

The total number of properties owned (or managed) by the Council at the end of 1950, is as follows:-

Council Houses.....	230
Requisitioned Houses.....	<u>6</u>
Total	<u>236</u>

UNFIT HOUSES

Demolition Orders on about 18 properties made pre-war situated on the Campingland, The Pyghtle, Westgate Square, Tumbler Hill and Northwell Pool, are occupied by virtue of licences issued by the Council half-yearly under the Defence (General) Regulations, 1939, which still continues to defer action under the Housing Act, 1936, owing to the scarcity of housing accommodation throughout the district. In view of such shortage of housing accommodation, the time is not yet opportune for the Council to determine its future policy on condemned houses.

In view of the Council's permission for one house to be re-conditioned (Webb, The Campingland), it may be desirable to extend such principle to the owners of the remaining condemned houses, especially in view of the available grants.

It must be remembered that such houses were condemned during a period of stable economic conditions, and that the deciding factor influencing the decision to condemn and demolish, was based upon the formulae "that the house was unfit for occupation and could not be made fit at reasonable cost".

Council houses for re-housing the occupants of condemned houses were then being built for £350, whereas today they cost nearly four times that expenditure.

Although the cost of reconditioning has increased, the pro rata increase is not in the same relation to that of new houses.

The standard of reconditioning for grants is high, expenditure must be confined within £100 and £600 and capable of extending the life of such properties up to 30 years.

SEWAGE DISPOSAL

A scheme costing £46,000 (approx) is being considered by the Ministry, and a local Public Inquiry is pending, and with County Council support, it is obvious that such scheme will receive approval during 1951.

SEWERAGE

Considerable difficulty in maintaining certain flat sections has been experienced during the year owing to the accumulations of cannery solid waste such as carrots, celery tops etc. Since the inauguration of an intercepting chamber at the Cannery Works, this nuisance has been reduced but still exists.

Some difficulty has also been experienced in maintenance of the northern portion of the sewerage system by trade waste from the Gasworks. A proportion of tar appears to be occasionally mixed with the gas liquor admitted to Lynn Road sewer. This tar tends to settle on the sewer inverts, traps solid matter, building up obstructions. Complaints have been made to the Eastern Gas Board and it is understood that this problem is receiving their attention.

HOUSE REFUSE -COLLECTION AND DISPOSAL

This service has been regularly maintained throughout the year without complaints, and it is anticipated that paper salvage will be resumed during 1951, which will improve the disposal work at the Council Tip.

STREET SCAVENGING

Street scavenging and cleansing of road gullies is carried out systematically and except for the period during snowfalls, without complaints.

NIGHTSOIL COLLECTION

The regular emptying and cleansing of pails, middens, vaults and cesspools has been carried out during the year. Much of this work (which costs over £300 a year) can be avoided by conversion to W.C.'s. and apart from the inclusion of such works in re-conditioning schemes, it would be a sound economic policy for the Council to offer financial assistance to owners for such conversions where conversions cannot be enforced under the Acts.

SANITARY INSPECTION OF THE AREA

A summary of the work done in the Sanitary Inspector's Department is tabulated below for the statistical use of the Medical Officer and for information of the Council:-

	<u>Inspections</u>	<u>Notices Served.</u>	<u>Nuisances (abated and pending)</u>
Drainage of Premises	12	8	7 pending, 1 abated.
Factories	9	4	4
Workshops	4	1	1
Carried forward,	25	13	13

	<u>Inspections</u>	<u>Notices Served.</u>	<u>Nuisances (abated and pending)</u>
Brought forward	25	13	13
Bakehouses	8	1	1
Food Shops	23	-	-
Cowsheds & Dairies	12	1	1
Restaurants	12	-	-
Verminous premises	1	1	1
Housing defects	31	12	10
Overcrowding	2	-	1
General Nuisances	12	1	1
Infectious Diseases	19	-	12 fumigated.
Rats & Mice	72	14	12
Dangerous Buildings	10	2	2
Buildings Demolished	6	2	2
Tents, Vans & Sheds	12	4	3
Water Supply	9	2	2
Smoke Nuisances	18	-	(Cannery pending)
Summary	272	53	61

MEAT AND FOOD INSPECTIONS

The Sanitary Inspector is the Meat & Foods Inspector for the Urban Area, and Inspector at the Ministry of Food Abattoir at Swaffham, and during 1950, the following animals were slaughtered:-

Cattle.....	437	Animals.	The grading of meat is executed after examination of carcasses for fitness of same for consumption, by the Ministry of Food who also deal with condemned carcasses and the clearance of hides etc.
Sheep.....	859	"	
Pigs.....	111	"	
Calves.....	10	"	
Total	1417		

During the year the following were condemned:-

<u>Cause</u>	<u>Carcases or parts</u>
Decomposed and/or injured flesh or severe bruising inflammation.	43
Plurisy or inflamed pleura or congested condition	10
Flesh with Cysts or abscesses	28
Erysipelas and dropsical	6
Carried forward	82

<u>Cause</u>	<u>Carcases or parts</u>
Brought forward	82
Cirrhosis and Liver Fluke	92
Emaciated and Diseased	8
Actinomycosis and Angioma	4
Tuberculosis	96
	292

During 1950, tradesmen submitted tinned foods for examination voluntary and in 95 per cent, the tins were found damaged, rusted and contents blown or in an advanced state of decomposition. These condemned foods mainly comprised corn beef, ham loafs, meat rolls, sausages, tinned fish, meat and fish pastes, fruit, soups, bacon, condensed milk, mouldy flour etc.

Copies of the Bye-laws made under Section 15 of the Food & Drugs Act, 1938, with regard to handling, wrapping and delivery of food and sale of food in open air, came into operation in June, 1950. Copies of the Bye-laws have been widely distributed and inspections of shops and market stalls regularly made.

The tradesmen generally comply with the regulations, but the handling and distribution of bread in shops or from roundsmen's vans, could be greatly improved by wrappings.

Unfortunately, scarcity of paper is again manifest and probably the time is not yet opportune to introduce wrapping of bread.

During the year the premises for milk pasteurisation have been improved to meet the requirements of the County Medical Officer, and milk supply and distribution in this area is generally satisfactory.

Yours faithfully,

CHARLES FROBISHER.

Sanitary Inspector.

